

David Raphael to Step Down from Executive Director Role at Jewish Grandparents Network

As co-founder of JGN, David revolutionized the Jewish community's view of grandparents as essential influences in Jewish family life

Feb. 14, 2025 -- After seven years founding, building, growing, and leading the Jewish Grandparents Network, David Raphael announced he is transitioning from his role as Executive Director on March 1, 2025, to serving as its Chief Zayde Officer (the moniker he currently uses in his missives to the JGN community).

"Partnering with wonderful community leaders in the creation and growth of the Jewish Grandparents Network has been one of the great joys of my professional life," **said David.** "That the founding of JGN coincided with my becoming a grandfather made it especially meaningful. In creating an organization that recognizes, advances, and supports the essential roles that grandparents play in nurturing Jewish traditions and values, we have provided a remarkable gift to Jewish communities and Jewish life."

In partnership with JGN co-founder, Lee M. Hendler, David will explore new projects and opportunities to continue to advance and strengthen JGN's important work. And as Chief Zayde Officer he will continue to speak, write, and share his wisdom about engaging grandparents. He also looks forward to spending more time with his two wonderful grandchildren.

During David's tenure as Executive Director, JGN spearheaded landmark research for the field about Jewish grandparent engagement, launched flagship initiatives and resources, cultivated vital organizational partnerships, and increased its audiences. Because of his efforts and dedication, JGN helps thousands of grandparents connect with their grandkids in meaningful Jewish experiences and provides opportunities for grandparents to learn vital skills that help them navigate complicated family dynamics.

"We are deeply grateful that David will still be involved in our work, sharing his expertise and wisdom," **said JGN Board chairs Ilene Vogelstein and Chip Edelsberg.** "Simply put, our organization would not exist today without David's vision and dedication, and that of co-founder Lee Hendler. David and Lee saw a gaping void in the Jewish communal ecosystem—and they responded. David's commitment inspired us every day. Now it's up to us to build on his incredible work and legacy."

In the immediate future, Terry Kaye, JGN's Associate Director and Director of Creative Partnerships, will serve as interim executive director. "Terry is the perfect person to assume this interim position," **added Vogelstein and Edelsberg.** "Her passion for JGN and her ability to execute will provide strong leadership during this period of transition. We have full confidence that Terry will lead us forward."

Over the next several months, JGN will conduct a search for a new CEO. David will help ensure a smooth transition.

"Kabbalistic Judaism speaks of *Tsimtsum*, God's act of contraction to allow humans to partner in creation," **David said.** "All of us practice *Tsimtsum* in our own ways and I believe that now by stepping back I can allow room for the amazing voices and leaders in JGN's community to advance our organization in dynamic new ways."

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